FROM

ESSEX:

Or a true

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LAMENTABLE MURDER

OF

A great Woman big with Two Children

on the Highway.

As also the miraculous Discovery of the Body, and Apprehension of a Man and a Woman, supposed to be the Authors of that barbarous Cruelty.

With Allowance *Ro. L'Estrange.*

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Bloody News from *Essex*.

ON *Fryday* the third of this instant *August*, a Gentleman and his man travelling a private Road in the County of *Essex*, and not far off where a former notorious Murther was lately commited neer the Town of *Bishops-Starford*, the Servant on a sudden found his horse to snort and flie back as if some strange frightful matter had stood in the way, when yet there was nothing that the fellow saw, it being in the middle of the day; so that he endeavour'd to put him forwards by whipping and spurring, but all in vain: whereupon the Master wondering at it, came up foremost himself; and then his horse takes the same humor, and by no means could be forc'd to go on. The Gentleman then concluding there was something more than ordinary in it, looking curiously about,

at laſt ſpies ſeveral drops of blood upon the ground, (which if he had freely ridden on, 'tis probable had not been obſervable) and alighting off his horſe, follows the bloody tract a pretty way till he came to a kinde of Thicket or private place cover'd with brakes, buſhes, *&c.* in which he finds, to his great amazement, the dead body of a woman yet reaking with its wounds, mangled in a lamentable cruel manner, and ſcarce yet cold.

Here may we obſerve and admire the wonderful ways and unlikely inſtruments Providence often makes uſe of to bring to Light deeds of Darkneſs, & diſcover Blood-guilty Maleſactors; as here the horſes give the Alarm, and the dumb creatures put their Riders upon the ſearch. To ſay that this was pure inſtinct, a certain natural averſion theſe generous beaſts have to humane blood, is neither probable nor true, contradicted as well by Experience, as Philoſophy; but to conclude that (ſomewhat like the caſe of *Balaam*) they were ſtopt and frighted by Providence, whether by the Miniſtry of Angels or otherwiſe, I ſhall not here diſpute,

just at that place, to the end the blood might be taken notice of, and consequently the Murther found out, and its wicked Authors brought to deserved punishment, is very reasonable to believe.

The Gentleman, you may imagine, was not a little surprized and amazed at so unexpected a sight, yet considering it as not onely convenient but necessary to acquaint the neighbouring people thereabouts, that they might levie *Hue and Cry*, and use all due means for apprehending the Murtherers, he and his man rid back again to a little Alehouse, being the next house, which he had not long before passed by, and riding up to the door, knockt very loud, and with a more than usual earnestness, ask'd who was within; which being heard by a man and a woman with him, call her his wife or his wandring-mate, which you please, they removed into an inner-room and desired their Host to deny them, and say no body was there. The innocent man not knowing their reason, but willing to oblige them, does accordingly answer that he had no body in his house but him.

himself and three children; but the Gentleman hearing some trampling and whispering within would not be so satisfi'd, but comes in with his man, demanding to look into the other Rooms; which the poor man was unwilling to consent to, denying them still, till the Gentleman told him, that there was a Murther committed hard by, and he did believe the Murtherers could not be far off, and therefore he was resolved before he went any further, to search that house for suspitious persons. These words of a Murther terrifi'd the man of the house, & presently made him open the door, where they found the man & woman as aforesaid: The Gentleman then examined the man, whom he knew to have gone lately such a way; to which he answered, that he did not know of any body but his own Wife, who was gone to such a Market to buy something necessary against her Lying-in, for she was very great with Childe: but added, That this man and woman came lately as from that way. Then the Gentleman inquiring what money his Wife had about her, was informed that she had onely

Three and eight pence, and all in Groats; and cauſing the man preſently to be ſearch'd found juſt the ſame ſum and pieces about him; whereupon the Gentleman told the Alehouſe-keeper he believed theſe people had murdered his wife, for in ſuch a place lay the dead body of a woman. The poor man was half diſtracted at this news, and running to ſee the body, found it to be his wife indeed barbarouſly murthered, her Womb being ripp'd open and two Children deſtroy'd! Sad fate of theſe poor Infants, to receive ſuch Cruelty from the world, even before they were come into it!

The Gentleman and his Servant in the mean time deteined and ſecured the ſuſpected perſons; and upon the man's return, getting more aſſiſtance, carried them before a Magiſtrate. Upon Examination they confidently denied their having any hand in the Murther; but the ſeveral Circumſtances of their coming that way laſt, deſiring to be deni'd, having juſt that ſum, and all in Groats, lay ſo hard upon them, that the Juſtice thought fit to commit them to Priſon; where, being ſince the late Goal-delivery, they muſt lie till Lent-Aſſizes.

'Tis ſtrange people ſhould commit ſuch a barbarous Act, and imbrue their hands in Blood, for ſo paltry

paltry a ſum, as what we have related in this caſe; but when men or womens hearts are ſet upon wickedneſs, an eaſie or ordinary Temptation ſerves to engage them in the moſt horrid Villany. One would think they might have been content to have taken her Money and ſpared her Life, and not have made themſelves guilty of Three Murthers at once: but ſome conceive that the woman murthered, being of a notable bold Spirit, might indiſcreetly threaten to proſecute them; and that therefore they diſpatch'd her to prevent her diſcovering them, hoping to ſecure one wickedneſs by committing a far greater. The Act was certainly very inhumane and bloody, attended with ſeveral aggravating Circumſtances; and if theſe perſons now in cuſtody be thoſe that did it, they deſerve Examplary puniſhment: So on the other ſide, if they be not guilty, 'tis not to be doubted but Divine Vengeance will ſhortly make manifeſt their Innocence by a diſcovery of the real Malefactors.

Who ſo ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed. Gen. 9. 6. Exod. 21. 12.

To me belongeth vengeance and recompence, their foot ſhall ſlide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte. Deu. 32. 35.

FINIS.